

Using Motivational Interviewing to Encourage COVID-19 Vaccination

Motivational Interviewing is a communication technique based on compassion and acceptance that is designed to use a patients' own motivations to encourage behavior change.

Here's how it works. The first letter of each step spells "OARS".

O

Open-Ended Questions allow your patients or colleagues to fully express their thoughts and help you to understand their story.

1. What do they already know about COVID-19 vaccines?
2. What problems or concerns do they have?
3. What information would they like from you?

A

Affirmations let your patient or colleague know that you can see they want to make the right choice for themselves and their family.

Give the person credit for the work they've done. Affirmation of past efforts builds confidence in their ability to change.

R

Reflective Listening demonstrates empathy, interest, and understanding.

Paraphrase what someone says to you to show that you are listening to them.

Show them that this is a safe and non-judgmental space for them to voice their concerns and ask questions.

S

Summarizing keeps you and your patient or colleague on the same page throughout your conversation.

Summarizing what you talked about will also help you close your conversation with a plan for action.

EXAMPLES

"What concerns do you have about the COVID-19 vaccines?"

"What questions can I answer for you?"

"How do you see COVID-19 vaccines benefitting you?"

EXAMPLES

"I appreciate how much you care about this issue."

"You're really trying to make the best decision for you and your family."

"It sounds like you've been doing some research. That's a great place to start."

EXAMPLES

"Yeah, it can be hard sometimes to tell what's true about the vaccines and what isn't."

"You're worried about how quickly the vaccines were developed."

"You're right. Making an informed decision is important."

EXAMPLES

"A minute ago, you said you wanted to talk about side effects. Maybe we can talk about those now."

"So you will make a vaccine appointment at the front desk on your way out. You're also going to share what you learned about the COVID-19 vaccines with your aunt at lunch tomorrow."



Americares is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine, medical supplies and emergency aid.

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